LITTLE BLUE BOOK NO. 976
Edited by E. Haldeman-Julius

Casanova
History's Greatest Lover

Clement Wood

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Casanova and the Women He Loved

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CASANOVA AND THE WOMEN HE LOVED

CHAPTER I

FIRST LOVE—BETTINE

Casanova was a real Harlequin in the greater comedy, which is played without masks. We think of him as one of the Medieval wholesale lovers, perhaps of the time of Don Juan or Henry VIII, of Cesare Borgia or Gilles de Rais, that field marshal of Joan of Arc from whom the legend of Bluebeard largely sprang. The Don Juan story originated in the sixteenth century; Henry VIII was as ancient; the Borgia Bull bellowed during the wild decade when Columbus was discovering America, and Gilles de Rais was even earlier. Casanova was almost a nineteenth century figure, being born in 1725, two hundred and thirty-odd years after America was discovered. Benjamin Franklin was nineteen years older than the great Venetian adventurer; George Washington, only seven years younger. The Venetian's father came of an ancient and noble family; he became an actor, married a shoemaker's daughter, and had as eldest child Giovanni Jacopo Casanova de Seingalt, the world's gentlest wholesale lover.

His own account of his life is a startling biographical skeleton. For the first eight and a half years, he tells us, he was an idiot; shall

we hold that this was, or was not, the appropriate beginning for a priest and a great lover? At Padua he was cured of idiocy, studied diligently, and at the age of sixteen he was given the degree of doctor and a priest's robes, and sent to Rome to make his fortune. He became the protege of the cardinal Acquaviva. Becoming entangled with the daughter of his French teacher, he was dismissed by his patron, and at the age of eighteen became a soldier. Two years later, on his return to Venice from Constantinople, he threw up the career of Mars and became a fiddler. In a short time he gave this up to become the adopted son of one of the foremost lords of Venice, and traveled in state in Italy, France, Germany, and Austria. For "wise and just reasons," as he words it, the Venetian inquisitors jailed him in the dreaded Piombi. And he was twenty-three: and had already been idiot, priest, lover, soldier, fiddler, and adopted nobleman.

No man had ever been known to escape alive from the hideous prison: but after fifteen months Casanova broke jail, with a reckless audacity which he has clothed in one of the finest adventure narratives in all literature. Self-made millionaire, speedily bankrupt, wealthy again, friend of Voltaire and more than one Pope, his colorful career continued. Pope Rezzonico, a Venetian, in 1760 created him a knight of St. John Lateran, and apostolic pronotary. He served half a dozen kings and queens, and was familiar in Portugal, England, Germany under Frederick the Great, Russia under Catherine, Poland, France, Spain, and Switzerland.

His kaleidoscopic loves continued. He was exiled from Florence, and only after two years of pleading was his Venetian citizenship restored, in 1774. After eight years, he quarreled with the whole Venetian nobility, and lived in Paris, Vienna, and Germany until his death. When he grew too old for active service of Venus, he sat down to write his memoirs—twelve volumes rich in history and incident. The number of love affairs related is almost beyond belief: and he is said to have omitted some of the more thrilling ones, for personal reasons. Whether Le Gras is right or not, in seeing him busied for most of his mature life as an organizer for free masonry throughout Europe, Casanova himself gives us unblushingly his chief occupation, which was love-making. There have been other books of love reminiscences, such as Pepys' strange furtive narrative, in cipher, of his amours: but none contains the frankness of the Venetian's. He leaves out hardly a single physical detail of his varied adventures: the memoirs are not food for Methodist bishops or American statesmen, whose obituary services paint them as the world's purest souls. Frank as these memoirs are, they have earned the highest praise of such varied critics as Oliver Wendell Holmes, Benedetto Croce, Remy de Gourmont, Arthur Symons, Havelock Ellis, Thackery, George Sand, Alfred de Musset, and I know not how many others with names of resounding weight.

At his maturity he was an athlete in love, and a redoubtable duelist and brawler—for he was six feet in height, and strong as an ox of

the Cyclops. But when we meet him first, in his memoirs, he is a shaver of only twelve years, and is already in love. His tutor in Padua had a sister, a strapping girl fifteen years old, named Bettine. At fifteen, a girl in northern Europe would be still playing her childish games; but in Italy women ripen more swiftly, and at fifteen a girl is already a woman in desire and ability. Let us not forget that Juliet, in the story and the play, was only thirteen; and that Beatrice was only nine when Dante saw her first, and fell irremediably in love with her. Many meridional girls are married before fifteen: and here was Bettine, unmarried, hardly skilled in loving, and seeking for an outlet for her emotional nature. The girl at once made a pet of the bright young pupil of twelve years, and, indeed, made herself something of a nuisance to him. She insisted upon aiding him in washing his face and hands, and more. Now no boy of this age glories in having his face and hands washed. When you add to this that the boy was just trembling upon adolescence, with its shynesses and inhibitions in the presence of members of the opposite sex, you can see how Bettine embarrassed the boy. Her continued caresses, on every occasion that she could steal, kept him in a fever of self-examination and self-condemnation. She found all sorts of excuses for touching him: "Sacramenti! But you are getting plump, my little Giovanni! Plump as a capon! Let me feel how plump you are—"

This was an inevitable and disquieting way of rousing youthful emotions; and the shrewd girl knew what she was doing, much better-

than the youth knew. Casanova, for his part, longed and ached to fondle her as she was fondling him. But he was a boy; he did not dare do it. He grew bitterly angry at himself for his cowardice.

On one ill-starred day, there came three new pupils for the tutor, one of them an ignorant, coarse son of a simple farmer, named Cordiani. Now a farm boy, by his familiarity with the conduct of live stock and poultry, is precocious in his knowledge of sex, compared to the city dweller: and an Italian farm boy of fifteen was quite a match for all of Bettine's bottled-up desires. Casanova could not understand this. How could Bettine prefer this lout to the noble lad of twelve years? How could three years make such a difference? Yet she clearly preferred the lout; whereupon the youngster became very jealous. Bettine still showed him attentions, on one occasion insisting in aiding Casanova at his bath. His emotions were suddenly quickened by this touch, and the outcome was very embarrassing to him. He felt that he had dishonored the girl, and must marry her to make reparations. Then he began to suspect Bettine of caressing Cordiani in the same way, and determined to have it out with her. On a night when the older people were to be away, he made the girl promise to come and see him when the rest had gone to bed. She gave the promise, and the boy retired to his room, confident that he would soon find out whether she really loved him or not.

Midnight came, one, two, three, four o'clock passed, and no Bettine. But this was outrageous! The boy grew furious, and an hour before

sunrise, unable to control his impatience, he slipped downstairs in his stockinged feet, to watch for Bettine when she came out of her room. The door was locked, he ascertained. And still she did not come. He had just decided to go back to his room, when he heard a noise within the room. Ah! She was coming at last! He approached the door—it opened—Not Bettine, but Cordiani came out first: and the big lout promptly gave the younger boy a kick that landed him flat on his back in the snow of the courtyard.

Furious at the treachery, Casanova returned to the door. Cordiani had by now locked himself within the room where he slept: and Bettine's door also was locked. The baffled Casanova gave one loud kick on her door, the watch dog started to bark, and the shivering youth retreated at once to the chill unease of his own sheets. Here he lay, plotting revenge: even to poisoning both of the faithless ones. Then a shriek rang through the house: Bettine's mother came, crying out that her daughter was dying.

Angry that she should dare to die before he could get even with her, Casanova hurried down to the room. The girl clearly was in dreadful convulsions. The doctors came, and disagreed about the cause of the illness; the youth was sure that the happenings of the night, culminating in the fright of seeing the meeting between Cordiani and the younger boy, was responsible. And then he discovered, in the girl's pocketbook, a note from Cordiani arranging a series of liaisons with the faithless Bettine.

The convulsions came on again and again; the girl's mother announced that an old serving woman, who was in reality a witch, had caused them. The old woman spat at her mistress, the mistress took after the witch with a stick, until only the priest could calm them. He was called upon to exorcise the devils from her body. When she burst out laughing, uttering outrageous insults, the priest began to beat her with his crucifix, saying he was beating the devil.

"If the devil has shocked you with words," the angry girl retorted, "fight him with words, you donkey. Go away!"

When he insisted on trying to drive the devils out, the girl taunted him that he was a vain fop, who spent most of the day combing his beard. If he would shave, she said, the devil would come out. . . .

"Father of lies, I shall double your suffering!"

"I defy you!" With this, she burst out laughing. She seized a large glass full of evil-smelling medicine from the apothecary's, and threw it at the priest, who received half of it—Cordiani getting the rest, to Casanova's delight. And everyone blamed the devil for it!

When she recovered, Bettine tried to woo Casanova again: but he had had enough of her and her faithlessness. And all at once the girl fell dangerously ill, of the smallpox and a high fever. In her illness, Casanova was devoted in his assistance; and, after her recovery, they continued friends, without that further intimacy which lovers prize so highly.

CHAPTER II

MADEMOISELLE C. C.

When Casanova had arrived at the priesthood, he came under the protection of Cardinal Acquaviva. He soon was granted an audience by Pope Benedict XIV, who presented the young prelate with the Order of the Holy Spur, appointing him also an apostolic pronotary. The young priest was less shocked than interested at the theatre, in having the eunuch who had the role of prima donna pointed out to him; and in learning that this trilling capon was the minion or favorite of Cardinal Borghese. Rome defended this custom by holding that "Hidden sin does not offend"; and such male prima donnas needed no chaperone, as a girl would need, in their *tête-à-têtes* with distinguished men. Casanova, in the memoirs, preaches vehemently against this custom, as a serious sin. Sin, in the eyes of most people, consists in other people's doing what one has decided not to do himself, chiefly because he does not want to do it himself.

And then Casanova left the clergy. He presented himself at Versailles, at the brilliant court of Louis XV. Here he observed the stunning de Pompadour, disliked the dour queen and her utterly artificial life, and met Marshal de Richelieu. When the latter asked, at the theatre, which actress the Venetian preferred, Casanova replied with an unintended witticism,

which set all Paris to laughing, and made the Venetian an immediate favorite in aristocratic circles. On a chance visit with a friend to the salon of the Flemish actress Morphi, whom the friend loved, Casanova was astounded at the sheer beauty of the woman's slatternly thirteen-year-old sister. The little girl was of course unmarried, and said frankly that she rated the first gift of her love at a stiff commercial figure. This was not what Casanova wanted; so exquisite was the child's body, that he had her painted from life. For some weeks he dallied in caresses with the young girl, of the kind which Parisians consider harmless. Then word came that the King had been shown the picture, and desired to see if the original was as perfect bodily as the image. Pleased with her, the King installed her in his harem of mistresses in Deer Park, where she bore him a son a year later. After two years, a jest of the girl's against the unattractive queen lost her the King's favor; but she departed with a dowry of four hundred and fifty thousand francs.

On his return to Italy, chance let Casanova aid a lovely girl, when her cabriolet overturned. On the next evening, at the strange ceremonial of marrying the Doge of Venice to the Adriatic, the girl came up, masked, and renewed the friendship. Through her Casanova met her lover, bearing the title of Captain in the Austrian army; and this man tried to cheat the Venetian on two occasions, without any finesse. Casanova had sickened of him, when by chance he was introduced to the mother and sister of the Captain, and at once was dazzled by the

beauty of the sister, Mlle. C. C. The girl was only fourteen, and Casanova twice her age: and each was at once attracted by the other. The shrewd brother made opportunities for them to meet, at the same time fleecing Casanova out of small sums, which the lover was willing to pay, for the privilege of being with C. C.

At her suggestion, they went to a private garden which he had rented. The girl was dressed only in a taffeta jacket and short skirt; and proposed a race, with forfeit to be paid by the loser. Casanova intentionally lost; and, as the forfeit, C. C. said that he must find her ring, which she proceeded to hide upon her person. Of course, he saw at once that this was to give him the opportunity to touch her thoroughly. After hunting slowly, he found it.

In the second race, Casanova was about to lose in good earnest, when he gave a cry, pretended to faint, and, as the solicitous girl came back to see what was wrong, beat her to the goal. His forfeit was that she exchange garters with him: for he had purchased for her an exquisite jewelled pair. In her naive innocence she let him put on a pair of gift stockings, and the garters: and he felt unwilling to press his suit upon such an unsophisticated maiden. Then the brother came with his mistress, and acted with extreme indecorousness with this woman in the room where his sister and Casanova were. The Venetian concealed the thing from the young girl; but detested the brother more than ever for his brutishness. The only excuse that the brother could later make to Casanova, was that he imagined that the latter and the young sister had already been as intimate.

C. C., in the meantime, had been reflecting upon what she had managed to see; and she was all on fire with curiosity as to what she had missed. Casanova was so desperately in love with her, that he assured her he would marry her; and then proposed that they then and there take each other for man and wife. The girl was as desirous as he. Accordingly, he notified the mistress of the casino not to interrupt them with food until she was called for: and turned to his young sweetheart.

"And may we be married this instant?" he insisted.

"Dispose of me, my own! I promise to God and you, from this moment on, and as long as I live, to be your faithful wife."

"I make you the same promise, my beloved. Come into my arms, complete my happiness!"

Most autobiographers would draw the curtain at this point, and leave heated fancy to imagine the rest. That is the Anglo-Saxon convention especially; there is a taboo against things of the body, which, especially since Puritanism came in in Milton's time, has been exceedingly strict in forbidding mention of things which were commonly described in the classic Roman and Greek literatures, and which indeed were matters of religious ritual in the older civilizations of Tyre, Sidon, Babylon, Egypt, and still older cultures. But the Gallic and Italian mind, even today, inclines to be more specific: and, in Casanova's time, he was but improving upon the custom of his race and his age, in leaving out no detail which the inquisitive might desire to know. And so Casanova leaves the curtain up for what follows.

What a thing is love, when it comes first to man and woman! Adam and Eve, or whoever might be called the first man and woman, knew the bright blossoming rapture in the Garden of Eden, or in whatever amiable spot men first walked. Long before them, beasts, birds, insects, and lower forms of life had been driven on to their strange low loves, that their races might multiply upon the face of the earth. There is romance enough in the high ecstasy of dragon flies mating upon the wing, and in the nuptial flight of the virgin queen bee, who circles far out of sight in the blue vaults of heaven, followed by the sturdiest male; in order that the mating, which requires the thinnest air, may take place, and that the queen thereafter may lay the eggs for her whole hive, while her luckless husband has plunged to his death at the very moment of love. There is strange romance too in the loves of plants, as in that water plant where the female blossoms appear at the surface of the pond, and the male blossoms at the damp soil under water. At the moment of mating, the male plant sends up its pollen in an air sac which bursts as it reaches the air above; and the gentle ripples of the water consummate the union. There are even stranger forms of love among the lower orders of life. These may be told of in all their lovely details: but the story of the mating of Casanova and his *defacto* wife, Mlle. C. C., must be left to your own lore on the theme.

After three hours of delight, the lover called for the supper—a frugal but delicious repast. The hostess solicitously asked

if her guests intended to go to the Opera, which she had heard was so beautiful.

At C. C.'s suggestion, Casanova turned over to the woman the key to the box at the Opera, which he had purchased, and presented her with two additional sequins, in order that she might enjoy herself fully. The woman's daughter, who was also to go along, presented herself, to kiss the hands of her benefactors. Casanova placed her at once as a beautiful blonde, quite attractive and, indeed, seductive, whose side glances told him that she was far more experienced in love than her mother suspected.

"She will go to the Opera with her lover," said the mother. "But I shall not let her go alone with him, for he is a buck! I shall go along, be sure of that."

Casanova approved of this, and asked the mother to have the gondola, which brought her and her daughter back from the Opera, wait for himself and C. C., who would return in it to Venice.

"What! You are going to stay here until our return?"

"Indeed yes, good woman. You see, we were only married today."

"Today! May the god of marriages bless your union!"

When the Opera-goers at length returned, they served coffee to Casanova and C. C. As the first peep of dawn gilded the great ducal palaces and the tumbling waves of the lagoon, the lover helped his young wife into the gondola, and they set out for the Queen of the Adriatic. Casanova faced the future with much tranquility. Up to now, he had been a roving

blade, sipping love here and there as lightly as a monarch butterfly samples all the sweets of a fragrant midsummer field. Now the calmer serenity of love was achieved, and descended upon him. He was married at last—married in the sight of God, and soon would be married in the sight of the law as well. And was there any man in Venice, indeed, who had a wife as young and lovely and intelligent as he had won? Beside her physical beauty, the girl had a sparkle of wit and an audacity of character that was wholly to his liking. Yes, he was well wed, and no mistake about that.

But the best laid plans of lovers have a tendency to go astray: some on the rocks of external obstructions, and many indeed on the hidden shoals of incompatability. Casanova was spared the second and more insidious of these dangers. Within a few days, his protector, M. de Bragadin, requested the hand of the lovely C. C. in marriage for his ward. The father of C. C. flew into a rage, absolutely forbade the match, and hastened to lock his daughter up in a convent. Casanova, of course, had no intention of giving the girl up, for all the convent walls in the world.

CHAPTER III

ENTER ALSO MLLE. M. M.

The Venetian lover met Mlle. M. M., Mother Superior of the convent where C. C. was staying, and found her a young woman of marked beauty and charm. Having in his nature that which forever made him a lover of all women worth loving, he set out to make a conquest of her. She told him frankly that she had a lover, whom she later revealed was the French ambassador, M. de Bernis—a man of great wealth, who never refused her anything, and with whom she had no concealment. This lover, M. M. said, would not mind her securing happiness in the company of Casanova,—although this was the first time she had ever desired to step outside of her one relationship in love. So our precious pair parted, after arranging their next meeting. The Venetian was especially thrilled at the idea, when he recalled nuns were traditionally regarded as the brides of Christ.

The lovely nun directed him how to reach her lover's casino. In order to remind him of the piquancy of the affaire, M. M. appeared still dressed as a nun, and met Casanova at the hour appointed. She saw that there was a second motive for his request concerning her costume —a fear that she had had to cut off her lovely hair, a requirement made of nuns. She soon eased his distress by showing that she had all the luxurious length and beauty of tresses of a

woman of the world, concealed beneath her nun's headdress. For the first two hours of this meeting, he pleaded his love with considerate restraint, and she gently repelled him. Then they rested, and had supper served by the silent and unobservant attendant. The service was silver and Sevres; and at the first taste of the delicious cooking Casanova pronounced that the chef was French, which she admitted.

He then discovered that he and M. M. had identical bottles of rock crystal, worn on their watches. Each, also, contained cotton soaked in the essence of roses: and this perfume, he reminded her, was not for sale, but was manufactured by the King of France, costing him thirty thousand pounds to make a pound. Both M. M. and Casanova had received theirs as gifts—she from her lover, he from the Venetian ambassador in Paris, who in turn had gotten it from the Pompadour.

It was now midnight; and, as if by a miracle, M. M. drew the sofa on which they had been sitting sideways, pulled forth pillows, sheets, cover, and at once had a magnificent and commodious bed ready. And yet she was not ready to grant her favors to him: the most that she would do was to let him hold her in his arms, and press kisses, tantalizingly sweet, upon her. At last, tired out with the unavailing struggle, he fell asleep. He slept until the chime sounded, that recalled her to the convent: but he went away with her promise to be with him two nights later.

On his return to his lodgings, he found a letter from C. C., who was now a nun in the con-

vent ruled over by Mother M. M. This note carried the astonishing intelligence that, by accident, she had been an eyewitness of his intimate conversation there with M. M. He was reassured when he next saw M. M., who told him that she had had the crack stopped up through which C. C. looked, so that no one in the future could see through it.

Casanova, to prepare for this meeting, rented the most sumptuous casino in Venice—the one ordinarily occupied by the British ambassador. Much to the amazement of the chef he had engaged with the place, that first night he had a solitary rehearsal of the dinner planned for the next evening, and criticized many of the details sharply. Everything must be right, he told himself, for this most perfect Sultana of the Master of the Universe. The anxious lover then slept till morning, and shortened the next day by gambling—delighted to find that the fickle goddess of chance smiled on him, as clearly as the Queen of Love was doing.

At the appointed time M. M., fully masked, came to the rendezvous, and Casanova escorted her to his nearby casino. Casanova was maddeningly intoxicated by her proximity: he said, half jesting, that he was sure he could not be worthy of this walking goddess: that some miracle would come, which would carry him away at the moment of ecstasy. His hands trembled as she let him unloose the diamond fastening at her neck. She was all delight at the charming arrangements he had made for the meal.

After the meal was completed, she suggested

that she make some punch. But the lover in Casanova protested at last.

In subsequent talk she confessed how she could not believe in a god who commanded his followers to restrain their passions in Lent, and give them rein the rest of the time: "Can you fancy a God keeping Lent?" she laughed gaily. When Casanova commented upon her liberality of belief, she named over some of the deist books which she had read, and told of her conflict with her confessor. This priest had ordered her not to read such books; and, in her disapproval of this, she had had her lover secure her a dispensation from the Pope, permitting her to confess to whom she pleased. She now confessed what she wished to the priest, and saved the rest for the ears of God.

The nun's lover, the French ambassador, went away on a journey; and in his absence, with his permission, the two lovers met frequently at his casino. On one occasion Casanova arrived an hour ahead of his mistress, and spent the time studying several folios of magnificent engravings. When she arrived, so great had he been thrilled by the pictures, that he insisted upon caressing her first in her nun's attire; and then let her transform herself, by a simple dress of Indian muslin, from a nun to a nymph.

Four times during the next fortnight the lovers met here; and it is not surprising that Casanova's affection for C. C began to cool. Love grows by practice. On the return of the French lover, Casanova moved back to his own lodgings, and there received a letter from M. M. telling of a strange whim of her other lover's—that he had desired to be present, con-

cealed behind a little cabinet, at the first meeting between M. M. and Casanova—the disappointing encounter; and she now confided in Casanova that he desired to be present, unseen, at another rendezvous; although of course he did not guess that Casanova would know this.

And so the pleasant comedy was run off, with Casanova aware that he had a concealed onlooker. The conversation was delightfully witty—for Casanova had determined to make it clear that he had no slight wit. All of the delightful byplay of love was indulged in, during the meal—such as eating oysters from the lips of the other lover. Each composed a stanza of verse, to the amusement of the other.

The next day, Casanova received a delightful note from M. M., telling that her other lover approved wholly of the Venetian. She enclosed with the letter a picture of herself, garbed as a nun above, and with a secret slide revealing a different pose below, that of the Magdalen of Corregio, which displayed all of her charms. In return, he sent her his picture, cunningly concealed below a religious design.

On their next meeting, they strolled by the gambling galleries, and M. M. was phenomenally lucky. They parted to meet again in the casino —and, to his amazement, the woman who sat there waiting for him was not M. M., but C. C. Suspecting that they might be observed in this place, Casanova restrained himself, and merely kissed his earlier love. She had not been a party to the substitution—it was all engineered by M. M. A letter from M. M. begged pardon for the mix-up, and as a result the three had dinner together in the casino. Meanwhile M.

M. introduced Casanova to her original lover, M. De Bernis, the French ambassador; and hinted that he would like to be invited to the dinner. Seeing no way out of it, Casanova extended the invitation. He learned from M. M. that M. de Bernis was highly interested in C. C.; and suspected at once that the French nobleman desired to make love to the girl. Well, he had made love to the Frenchman's mistress; it was a ticklish situation.

To his relief, the ambassador was not present, when the three met. Instead, he sent a note saying that he had been prevented from attending; and invited the three to be his guests at dinner a few evenings hence. This left Casanova with the delicate task of making the evening pleasant for two charming women, both of whom desired his love. The next day, he called at the French ambassador's hotel, and checked up the man's excuse for not attending. As he expected, he discovered that the ambassador had dined with the Spanish ambassador, and had never intended to be one of the party. . . . And on Friday, of course, M. de Bernis expected him to absent himself as obligingly. . . . It was a difficult situation: for, after all, Casanova still intended to make C. C. his wife.

In a grumpy humor, he stayed away on Friday; and notes from the two women, the next day, let him know that all had turned out as he feared: M. de Bernis had been successful, in his precious suit with C. C.

In the weeks that followed, M. M. became dangerously ill, and Casanova at length allowed himself to be overcome in love by Tonine, the

attractive maid at his lodgings. He also made love to an attractive girl, an invalid, upon the specious claim that his love-making would cure her invalidism. The invalid was on the high road to recovery, when trouble overtook Casanova. An inquisitive spy for the inquisition discovered that the former priest had in his library certain books of magic: and Casanova was arrested as a heretic, and confined in the Doge's Palace. From the prison, the Piombi, where he spent more than a year, he later succeeded in escaping, as he tells in the most thrilling chapters in his memoirs.

On his escape to Paris, he visited M. de Bernis, who let him know that C. C. was now married, and was very unhappy. Whereupon Casanova turned to seek what new loves he could discover.

CHAPTER IV

THERESE DE LA MEURE

Soon thereafter Casanova was introduced, by a fat middle-aged woman who was a niece of the Pope, to her cousin, M. Tiretta, and to a lovely young girl, Therèse de la Meure. Tiretta he soon found out to be a provincial attempting to pose as a man of the world; yet he came to like the unsophisticated youngster. The Venetian was even more pleased to learn that the girl had only been out of the convent school one month: for pleasant memories reminded him what he might expect from a convent-bred girl.

While the room played at cards, Casanova sat in a corner conversing with Therèse. He made his talk intentionally broad, telling her how the queer cousin had had a brief affair with old Mme. Lambertini, with explicit statement of the details. Temporarily this embarrassed the girl: and this was what the Venetian adventurer desired. For his method of conquest was by open attack, rather than the stab in the back. He went on to discuss other matters in a manner that made the maiden blush; and added to this certain liberties of conduct that both puzzled and frightened her.

Like a well-bred girl, she left him promptly, and went over behind her aunt's chair: but Casanova, convinced that she was not as innocent as she seemed, believed that she would

come back. The aunt, who was deep in her cards, lost a trick, and blamed it on the ill luck the lovely Therèse brought her; so she sent the girl back to Casanova.

He took still further liberties. He soon learned from her that she had never loved, and would never accept a lover, she said, until she had a husband.

Casanova's friend, Tiretta, and a third man came over to the fire to talk to the lovely Therèse with him; he already described her in his mind as "his new conquest."

Three days later, Casanova received an astonishing letter from Therèse. In this she told him that her aunt was trying to force the girl's marriage to a rich merchant of Dunkirk. The girl, on the day of her marriage, by her mother's will, was to receive 25,000 ecus, which apparently amounted to 75,000 francs. Accordingly, she proposed marriage to Casanova, and stated that she would bring with her the 75,000 francs to him, and a similar sum at the death of her aunt. She ended by asking him either to agree, or to agree not to see her again: as her only happiness lay in marriage with him, or in forgetting him.

Four days' deliberation convinced him that he did not love the girl: and yet he did not desire to give her up. There was little scruple in the man's love desires. He went to see aunt and niece, and offered them the use of his window from which to observe the torture and execution of Damiens, who had attempted to kill the King. Carried away by his own eloquence, Casanova told the girl that he was

going to marry her, much to her delight. She went so far as to confess what her letter had not contained, that she cared more for him than for any man in the world.

The torture of Damiens took four hours. And during it, Casanovas' young friend Tiretta, who stood behind the fat aunt of Therèse, offended the lady; although she kept quiet at the time.

The next day, the aunt sent for Casanova, and complained of the incident. Like a true courtier he laid the blame upon her own charms, saying that no man could have resisted her; and of course the fat thing was hugely flattered at this. And yet she continued to complain; and, as a result, Casanova promised to bring the young man to her on the next day, in order that she could tell him to his face what she wished to.

Casanova gave Tiretta some sound advice, reminding him that the aunt was well-bred, wealthy, and would appreciate most of all egregious flattery. With this warning, he took Tiretta to the aunt, and went himself into the next room, where the lovely Therèse was. She had difficulty in understanding just how the aunt had been offended. Again, what satisfaction could Tiretta give her?

Casanova's plans were revealed at once. "His expiation, if I am not mistaken, will consist in a declaration of love. He will plead ignorance of the crime, of course, and become her lover; I have no doubt that the wedding will take place tonight."

"Oh, it's all so preposterous! My aunt is concerned only with the salvation of her soul.

And—how could the young man possibly pretend to be in love with a face like hers? Have you ever seen a more hideous face?"

"Dear heart, these are trifles for a strapping fellow twenty-five years old. It is easy to have love's flame roused then: with me, on the contrary, it takes charms like yours, which I wish to possess legitimately."

An hour had now passed: Tiretta was still closeted with the aunt: this promised well for the progress of the reconciliation. Casanova suggested this to the girl, and hinted that he was hungry. The girl spread a light supper of cheese, glaced ham, wine, and bread—and the lovers finished the last crumb. Roquefort cheese and Chambertin wine, Casanova tells us, are unequalled for restoring love, or bringing a nascent love to a head.

And still no word from the aunt and M. Tiretta.

"You are not curious to know what Tiretta and your aunt are doing?"

"Maybe they are playing cards. I will peep through the keyhole. I can see nothing but candles, with wicks on them at least an inch long."

"I told you so. Give me a blanket. I shall lie down on this sofa, while you, dear friend, go to bed. But first show me your bed."

The girl led him to her little room, which contained hardly more than a pretty bed, a small praying stand, and a large crucifix.

"Your bed looks too small for you."

"No, indeed, I am quite comfortable in it." With this, tired and sleepy, she lay down.

"What a charming wife I shall have! Don't move—let me admire you as you are."

The girl covered her eyes, in blushing confusion. "My friend, I am afraid— But—afterwards—you'll never love me again, isn't that right?"

"All my life!"

The insatiable lover could not be withheld further.

His first kisses were accompanied by constant promises, given in the heat of passion, that he would not press his suit further. But, asks Casanova, what lover, at such a moment, will refuse to give any promise demanded of him? And what lover, having given such a promise, will not promptly hasten to break it?

At last his arms opened imperatively; she fled into them as a bird into a protecting thicket. Nor did she leave him until the blue fingers of dawn toyed at the slitted shutters.

Then, after replenishing the fire, the girl tucked Casanova in his blanket on the couch without, and went into her own room, regarding herself as wife at last, and girl no longer. At noon of that new day, Casanova was waked by the entrance of the aunt, who appeared in grand disarray.

"You are sleeping, monsieur?"

"Good morning, madame. Well, what has become of my friend?"

"I have quite forgiven him."

"He is your friend now?"

She essayed a blush. "And more. Where is my niece?"

"After we ate what we could find, and had a charming conference, she retired into her little room there."

"Let us go and see her. Oh, she has locked herself in. Open the door! Why do you lock yourself in, you little prude? Monsieur is a perfect gentleman. Get dressed, my dear niece, for we must pack our things. And listen—it's quite unnecessary for you to relate this adventure of mine with M. Tiretta."

"I? My dear aunt! Have I said anything the other times?"

"The other times! Listen to the girl!"

When Casanova found his friend again, the young man admitted ruefully that he had practically sold himself to the aunt for a year, as her attendant, at twenty-five louis per month, together with clothing and lodgings. The Venetian congratulated him; and in the weeks that followed spent several happy nights with Therese.

And then the merchant of Dunkirk arrived—the man to whom the aunt had affianced her. The girl demanded that her lover either marry her, or leave her. Quick decisions never pleased him: he desired to continue in possession of Therese, without marrying her.

She came to his room one night, fully dressed.

"You must tell me, before we go further," she began, "if I must consent to this marriage."

"How do you like the gentleman?"

"He does not displease me."

"Then consent."

The girl's eyes closed a moment, she staggered slightly. "That is enough. Goodbye. From this moment our love ceases, and our friendship begins. I must leave—"

He used all his persuasiveness in the endeavor to get her to remain; at last offering immediate marriage. But her mind was made up. Her refusals made Casanova desire her more than any creature living: in person, by letter the next day, he begged her with all his passion to marry him. But the chance had passed: and the lovely Therèse went from his arms forever.

CHAPTER V

MADEMOISELLE X. C. V.

Casanova had now reached thirty-three: this refers to his age, and undoubtedly understates the number of his love affairs up to this time. Five years before, while living in Padua, he had fallen in love with the eldest daughter of Mme. X. C. V., the mother being of Greek birth and Roman Catholic faith, and married to an Episcopalian Britisher. At that time, the mother had excluded Casanova from her daughter's society; and, in the meantime, she had persuaded her husband to die a Catholic, and had herself professed the Episcopal faith in England, in order to inherit his property. Casanova called this conforming to prejudice consecrated by the laws of nations: his wording is apt.

During the Padua days, the daughter had not shared her mother's antipathy to the Venetian adventurer, and had written an affectionate letter of farewell, which was some comfort to the disappointed lover. He was the less downcast, because at the time he was deep in his double love affair with the beautiful nun M. M. and the charming C. C. At that time Mlle. X. C. V. had been an exquisite girl of fifteen, with a cultured mind in addition to her bodily loveliness—and such a mind Casanova, like all sensitive lovers, found even more seductive than mere physical appeal.

Now, far away from Venice and Padua, he again encountered the lovely girl, grown into radiant womanhood. It was at the theatre, and she at once beckoned him over to the box where she sat with her mother. The latter was now as cordial as she had once been cold, and invited the scapegrace Romeo to visit her and her daughter at their hotel.

Ah, Casanova, ever unable to resist a pretty face! In his memoirs the wily love rogue states soberly that he suddenly discovered that his love had blossomed, in the intervening five years, to the same perfection that charming Mlle. X. C. V. had blossomed into perfect womanhood. *Tête-à-tête* with the young woman, she assured him of her love, and her admiration for the brilliant audacity of his escape from the Piombi. He met her two brothers—the elder of them only fourteen, a brilliant youth, sighing for the moment when he would inherit his fortune, in order thereafter to devote his life to debauchery. At this very time Casanova was conducting another intrigue with the young Balletti; but she, lacking culture and sophistication, left a gap which the twenty year old daughter of Mme. X. C. V. amply filled.

At the ball of the Opera, Casanova, without a mask, was approached by a woman wearing a black domino. Her manner was somewhat agitated; and, when she unmasked, the Venetian discovered to his delight that it was the charming Mlle. X. C. V. Infatuated with her, he sought to embrace her; she did not refuse the caresses, but with a preoccupied air pushed him gently away. He told her that he had

heard that she was to marry the wealthy old French general revenue agent. With much spirit the girl said that she would never agree: that, in fact, she had already given her heart to another—a man from Casanova's own Italian city.

She went on and told the strange love affair she had entered. It seems, that, on leaving her before, at the mother's insistence, Casanova had written for her a poem, *The Phoenix*, in which he had pictured romantically the sort of man who was worthy of her love. He had given his fancy full rein, making the imaginary man the possessor of all conceivable physical and moral virtues—a demigod rather than a man. The girl now confessed that she had at last discovered the man, after falling in love with his imagined image. At this Casanova sighed internally: the ancients were wise, who made Love the only god who was blind! She explained that again her mother had come between her and the man. This was as far as her confidences went, at this meeting.

The next day, a letter was delivered into his hands from the girl—a letter whose contents astounded him.

"It's two o'clock in the morning. I am in need of rest, but the difficulty I am in prevents me from sleeping. The secret I am going to confide in you, my friend, will cease to burden me, as soon as I have deposited it in your breast. Confession will be a great relief. I am to have a child, and my position makes me desperate. I have decided to write you about it, as I feel it would be impossible to tell you

by word of mouth. I entreat you to write me a line in reply."

Of all the amazing things! So the girl had yielded to this other Venetian, and this trouble had resulted! Casanova wrote the reply, and as soon as possible met the girl. He returned her her note, so that she could destroy it—after mentally committing its contents to memory, of course; and placed himself at her service, to be of any aid he could. She was already four months gone, she said.

"We must try to prevent the birth."

She shuddered. "No, no! That would be wicked!"-

"Alas, I know; but it is not worse than suicide, which you speak of."

"I would rather destroy myself."

Whereupon Casanova said that he would find some way out: an operation might destroy the mother's life too, so crude were the methods then practiced. The girl asked him to take her to his quarters; which he did with alacrity, sure that she would favor him. After an omelet and some champagne, he besought her love; but, to his dismay, she repulsed him firmly. In spite of his pleas and her tears, she would not yield: and at last told him definitely that, if this were the price of his friendship, the friendship must cease.

At once Casanova became contrite, and assured her that she was entitled to his friendship without any payment. The difficulty in attaining his desires, the restraint he was forced to put on himself in the presence of the charming Anglo-Greek, had its usual result in

a love relationship: it increased his desire all the more.

While dining with Mme. d'Urfe, Casanova asked her if she knew any infallible method of avoiding disgrace to a young lady, who had carried too far the license of having a lover. To his delight, the lady replied that she had an infallible remedy—the aroph of Paracelsus, the great medieval metaphysician. This mixture of saffron, myrrh, virgin honey, and other substances, was said to be an absolute cure: only, it must be applied by the lover himself, at a time when he loved most devoutly.

Ah, wicked Casanova, sly rogue, I can see your eyes twinkle at this remedy. To you it seems utterly ridiculous; yet are you so unscrupulous, as to be willing to try to persuade the charming girl to use it, with you in the role of the absent lover?

In any case, he explained the matter to the girl, and let it rest there, confident that she would come to him with the request that he try the remedy. Instead, she told him that her mother had ordered her to be measured by the dressmaker for the trousseau for the marriage to the rich revenue agent: and, in her despair, she told him calmly, she had determined to kill herself. Casanova assured her that there must be some other way: and offered himself as a means of giving her the infallible aroph. In her desperation, she agreed, if only some way could be found.

The wily Venetian soon discovered that there was a vacant room in the top of the house occupied by the girl and her mother, in which

the scullion and the chambermaid were accustomed to amusing each other. These were bribed to hold their tongues, and he secreted himself here, after securing a preparation made only of honey and some perfume.

At eleven o'clock at night there was a slight noise outside the door, and, when he opened the door, there was the girl, trembling with excitement. With an affectionate caress he drew her into the room, bolted the door, and stopped up the keyhole, so that no one outside could possibly see within. Then the two of them, the sober girl troubled about her future, the sly lover with his scheme for duping the girl, made ready to apply the supposed remedy. It had to be applied for five or six days—and this prospect pleased Casanova immensely.

She gave him full co-operation in the strange remedy.

After a few days, she began to realize that it would not be efficacious. In the meantime, Casanova, having gained his point with the fair Mademoiselle, had arranged through a friend with the abbess of a convent to take the girl in, and see that the birth took place in complete secrecy. So great was her delight at this termination of her anxiety, that the girl gave herself to the shrewd lover without troubling about the aroph, and immediately afterwards departed for the convent.

Some months afterwards, she gave birth, in the convent, to a fine boy; and afterwards returned to Venice with her mother, and became a great lady there. Meanwhile Casanova turned his eyes elsewhere.

CHAPTER VI

THE SECOND MLLE. M. M.

Everyone wished to present the Venetian to Voltaire, when he arrived in Paris: and the introduction was soon a thing accomplished. The great French skeptic was much impressed by the guest's literary acumen, and the fact that he had memorized all fifty-one of the cantos of Ariosto. Without an error Casanova repeated thirty-six stanzas for the edification of the company,—the portion of the epic where Orlando goes mad. The Venetian wept as he gave the great scene, and his auditors wept too. On a subsequent visit, Voltaire happened to be waspish, and the two did not agree at all.

Meanwhile, a councillor, met at the great author's house, had invited Casanova to visit with him three young ladies, two sisters and a cousin, whose conduct might amuse him. The girls, charming rather than beautiful, were apt in love: and the orgy after supper, participated in by both the Venetian and the councillor, was a memorable one.

Soon thereafter, at a watering place, Casanova saw two nuns near a fountain, and to his amazement recognized in one of them his beloved M. M. She did not speak to him,—he reasoned at once that this was because of the other sister; so cautiously he watched their departure, and saw them enter a peasant's house. When he neared the house, the peasant

woman came out, and told him that the nun wished him to call at nine that evening, as by that time the other sister would be asleep.

He found a ladder leaning against a window, climbed it, and there saw the beloved nun's face. At once he covered it with kisses; and then asked her what in the world had brought her to this out-of-the-way spot?

To his amazement, she replied in a voice that was not M. M.'s, saying that he should know why M. de Coudert had sent her here, to get herself out of the plight she was in.

At once he revealed that he had never heard of M. de Coudert, or seen her before; but that he had taken her for the dear Italian nun of the same order, named M. M.

"Why, that is my name too!"

"Well, you must tell me why you are here, since I will do all in my power to give the aid I was not sent to give."

The lovely nun, with much sighing, explained how this M. de Coudert had found a way of climbing the convent wall and making love to her; and she expected a child. He had then done all that his influence permitted to clear up the situation, sending her to this spot for three months to take the waters for her health. As the time for confinement drew nearer, the other nun, who was not in the secret, was to be given a sleeping potion by the peasant woman, and would then awake none the wiser. But now, wept the lovely nun M. M., the three months were almost up, the child had delayed, and she feared that she would have to return in her condition to the convent and to disgrace.

Casanova reflected how admirably the nun's costume concealed this condition; and wondered whether or not it was originated, like the great bustle and hoop-skirt styles so popular in liberal courts, as a cover for amours. Would not the other nun suspect this conversation?

"Oh, no; we gave her some of the sleeping potion."

Casanova promised to do what he could to get personal word to M. de Coudert; for clearly the nun's letters to him, telling him of her present predicament, had gone astray. The next night he called again, and found that the other sister had not yet wakened from the sleeping potion: that, indeed, she might be slowly dying from the dose. Quite cold-bloodedly Casanova recommended that the other nun be left to die in her sleep, as she would then go straight to heaven; and he persuaded M. M. and the peasant woman to agree, although M. M. had a fainting spell at the idea.

On his visit the next night, he was delighted to learn that M. M. had given birth to a bouncing boy. However, the other sister was still under the effects of the sleeping potion. The peasant woman disposed of the child; and Casanova went away, to see what would come of the strange situation.

When he called the succeeding night, M. M. met him with a saddened face.

"What news?"

"The sister is dead. She will be buried tomorrow, the day we were to have returned to the convent. I wrote to the abbess; she will

send another sister, or else order me to be escorted by my peasant woman."

Casanova's face was serious: so much depended on what the local village priest, who must have been summoned to examine the dead woman, would say. If he had any brains, he would know at once that she had died of poison. "What did the priest say?"

M. M. smiled slightly. "He said that the sister died in a cerebral lethargy, brought on by a stroke of apoplexy."

"What incredible good fortune!"

Casanova gave the peasant woman money to have fifteen masses said for the soul of the dead woman. The peasant reported that the corpse was dreadful to look at, and that two other women were watching it constantly and sprinkling holy water on it, to keep off the witches, who otherwise, in the form of cats, would tear it to pieces.

Shaking his head at the childishness of this superstition, the Venetian went to rejoin the lovely young nun. He asked her for details of the unresponsive M. de Coudert. "Is he rich? Is he good-looking?"

"Wealthy, yes; but never good-looking! The man is a hunchback, and all of fifty years old."

"And you could love a man like that?"

The little nun shrugged her shoulders daintily. "Love him? I pitied him. He said he was going to kill himself: and I believed him. That would have been a sin that would have damned his soul. I could only save his soul, you see, by yielding to his insistence. And I

had always thought one had to yield three times to conceive—"

"Accursed ignorance! Is there any other force in the world, that causes so many ills? Of course, he wanted other meetings with you."

The nun smiled quietly. "What he wanted is another story, dear friend. I yielded nothing more. I promised my confessor that I would not."

While the peasant woman was serving a simple spotless supper for the two of them, Casanova reflected upon the artless girl, and the trouble she had gotten herself into. When the meal had been finished, he reminded the nun that, this soon after her confinement, she could hardly walk to the convent.

"It will be ten days before the sister comes; and I think I can walk then. Of course, my body is still weak—"

It was just such a little opening as this that Casanova always waited for. This gave him the opportunity to talk learnedly about her condition, and to offer himself as medical authority to make sure that she recovered her strength. This gave him more intimacy with her than he would otherwise have obtained. Soon afterwards, he left the girl, after a passionate kiss, which did not displease her lips.

On the next night, he received permission to tell the girl all the details of his affairs, lasting over two years, with the other nun, whose name also was M. M. As a climax to the story, he showed her the pictures of the first M. M.—the front picture being clothed in the garb of a nun, and the one revealed by the hidden slid-

ing section being no less lovely than Phryne before her judges.

As his next step, Casanova persuaded the lovely young nun to call him father, which of course gave him permission to kiss her like a daughter: and it was not hard for him to waken in her some of the flame that he felt. She on her part gossiped freely of the love devices of the nuns in the convent, which was neither news to him, nor would it have astounded the great school of Greek woman poets who flourished on Lesbos long ago. The old confessor, she continued, treated this as a mere trifle, and absolved it without even affixing a penance.

Naively she confessed, at length, that she loved him. Their caresses grew more loving, but in the end he saw that she was not going to yield without violence on his part: and that would spoil the perfection of the relationship. Accordingly, he went away at last, scorched by the ecstatic unfulfilment.

The next night, to his delighted amazement, M. M. told him that she had changed her mind. All night, she said, she had dreamed of being held in his arms far more intimately than he had yet held her: and Freud says we dream what we wish. She drank fully of the claret that was served with supper: and, in the midst of his kisses afterwards, she suddenly fell asleep. Alas, he reflected ruefully, that was sometimes the effect of wine on people unaccustomed to it. And was he, then, to be deprived of the goal of his desires?

This was the problem presented to him: and he solved it in typical Casanova fashion.

Upon the next day, she presented him with a double picture of herself, like the one of the former M. M. She had merely, she confessed blushingly, had the other picture copied by a master, except for the color of the hair: for hers was black, while the Venetian's was lighter. Delighted with this gift, the two lovers were soon again tasting the real lotus, whose effect is so great that it makes all else forgotten.

Word came to them on the next day that the two sisters who were to escort her back to the convent had already started, instead of waiting the ten days. This threw a sadness over the lovers. Casanova urged the new M. M. to follow him at once to Rome, where he would persuade the Pope, whom he knew, to relieve the nun of her vows; and where she and he could then marry and love forever.

"No, dear friend— I have lived long enough. Let me go back to the tomb."

Up almost to the very minute when the two other sisters had arrived at the peasant woman's house, the two lovers continued affectionate. And then they parted.

After she had returned to the convent, the infatuated Casanova paid a formal visit there, and secured permission to have a strange supper served, with six nuns eating behind their grating, and he and five friends eating in front of them. Yet he could not remain faithful to an image behind convent walls: and so, first with the lovely Desarmoises girl, whose lover

was ill, and later with Donna Lucrezia, mistress of the Duke of Matalone, and her daughter Leonilda, he enjoyed love. Lucrezia had been his mistress years before; and she insisted, whether truly or not Casanova never knew, that Leonilda was really the Venetian's daughter.

M. M., still in the convent, had become very affectionate toward a little girl, barely twelve years old. She had no jealousy of Casanova's interest in this girl: after all, they were separated by the grating. The little girl insisted loudly that she had no intention of becoming a nun; she wanted to enjoy the world too much! She was all interest when Casanova told her the details of his brief nights with Lucrezia and Leonilda; and she was an apt pupil. M. M. tactfully absented herself most of the time, permitting much amusing byplay to the Venetian.

The little girl was sorry to see him go; but his affairs called him to visit Turin, where he felt sure he would not have to remain lonely and loveless.

CHAPTER VII

LIA OF TURIN

It has surely become clear, by this time, that Casanova's function in life was that of being a lover. He had no slightest scruples about being a lover: to him, that was his business. Married women, girls as young as twelve, nuns, all were one to him: he pursued one and all with the same devoted insistence. Nor were there ethical scruples in the way he loved: he was constantly gaining a mistress by promising marriage, and then failing to carry out his promise; he did not hesitate to use trickery to gain his goal, or to take the loved one while she was temporarily defenseless. How are we to judge such a man?

Or are we to judge such a man? And, if so, by what standards? We can admire the elephant for what it is, and not require that it be an office building; we can speak highly of a bowl of soup or a bisque tortoni, without expecting to use either as a ferry across the Mississippi, or a patent cigar lighter. Things are what they are: and Casanova was utterly a lover, predominantly in the sense of sheer physical love. This was the first compulsion, of course, laid upon the male: his duty was to fertilize the female, at all costs; and the cost sometimes, as among the spiders and their kindred, amounted to the death of the amorous male. Whatever business Casanova was en-

gaged in, whether free lance diplomacy or concealed free masonry, this apparently always came second to his love-making. With such a lover as Julius Cæsar, who may conceivably have had more amours than Casanova, love was definitely secondary to ambitious statecraft, and was often used to aid the purposes of his statecraft. But not with the Venetian: with him, to live was to love and he was merely the most complete expression that we have of a whole great period in European history: that period that swept England during the Restoration, Elizabethan and other ages, and that covered the Continent for a longer time. When Washington's soldiers were stamping their chill feet on the icy ground at Valley Forge, Casanova was carrying on his later amours; when this young republic was trying to disentangle itself from the meshes of Franco-British diplomacy and conflict, Casanova sat chuckling as he wrote his memoirs.

We left him on his way to Turin: that city so overrun by police and spies that kept women were not tolerated at all, and only the wives had liberty. Of all the women he saw here, the Venetian was most interested in the lovely girl pointed out to him as Lia, the invincible Jewess, who had resisted successfully the efforts of all the men of Turin against her. Her father was a well known dealer in horses; and Casanova promptly purchased an expensive horse, and presented him to the daughter, on the sole condition that she agree to ride with him when he wished, during the six weeks he

stayed in Turin. She, flattered by the subtle compliment of the shrewd attack, consented.

Thereupon her father sought to sell the adventurer a phaeton with two horses; and Casanova told Lia outright that he would buy them, if she would give him her love as fully as she would after a long and attentive courtship. She refused with dignity. Casanova thereupon stayed away from the household, convinced that the father would insist that the daughter persuade the visitor to buy the rig, quite uninterested in whether his daughter gave herself to the man or not.

Sure enough, Lia invited the Venetian at breakfast a couple of days later. She told the insistent man that she had inadvertently revealed to her father that it lay in her power to make Casanova buy the horses and phaeton; and, for her sake, she insisted that he at once complete the bargain, and trust to her to grant him her favors when she loved him.

Smilingly Casanova told her that this was impossible. The girl half yielded, and told her father that Casanova had agreed to complete the purchase. He did so, trusting her honor. Instead of yielding to his importunity, she put him off repeatedly. He felt annoyed at her tantalizing tricks: and turned meanwhile to one of the girls employed in a lace house.

Meanwhile, at the recommendation of this proprietor of the lace house, Casanova had rented a small house in Turin, where he would be free of police surveillance. To this house, on Thursday of Holy Week, came Lia and her father Moise, the dealer in horses. It was

against the prejudiced law for Jews to show themselves in the streets during Holy Week; so the Venetian persuaded father and daughter to continue as his guests for the three days. Moise, the irrepressible trader, had with him a ring which he wanted Casanova to buy.

"I could not buy the ring," said the adventurer, "except from the hands of Lia."

The Jew smiled, thinking that the young man intended to present the jewel to his daughter; but Casanova had other plans. He placed the Jew and his daughter in a large room near at hand; but by now he had done so much for the Jewess, that he wished her to come to him of her own free will.

On the next day Moise, seeing that the ring was still unbought, and having business which forced him to go out, law or no law, borrowed his host's carriage for the day, promising to return in the evening and get his daughter.

As soon as the father had departed, Casanova bought the ring, paying six hundred sequins for it, but on his own conditions. And it was in his own house, where Lia could not again deceive him.

As soon as the father was well out of sight, Casanova ordered her to fulfil her bargain. There was no reluctance on her part now. He proved an exacting lover, making her yield to his every caprice. Well, there was now no way out of it, and she gave in gracefully. In the evening the father returned, as pleased as the Venetian was at the outcome of his bargaining.

Nor did Casanova give the ring to the girl

at the end of the loving. He had not promised to, and felt that all the shrewdness should not be on one side.

After leaving Turin, he made his way at length to Berlin, where he was granted an audience by Frederick the Great. This resulted in an offer, made by the German monarch, of a very insignificant post, at a very inadequate salary. Casanova, much amused, received the offer with dignity, but did not accept it. At the court of Catherine of Russia, classed by historians as one of the greatest of queenly courtesans, the Venetian was interested most in the statesmanlike qualities of the ruler. From here, he made his way at last to Spain, still seeking an adequate lover.

CHAPTER VIII

NINA BERGONZI

While attending the bull ring in one of the suburbs of Barcelona, Casanova's attention was taken by a woman of imposing and extraordinary appearance. When he asked his companion her name, the man answered, "That is the famous Nina."

"Why famous?"

"If you do not know her reputation, I could never begin to tell you the details of her career here."

At the same time, an attendant of the woman came over to Casanova's companion, and said that the beauty would like to know the name of the stranger. Casanova, flattered, gave answer that he would be pleased to meet her after the performance. His companion then told him that the woman was also a Venetian; that she was a dancer, and was mistress of the Captain-general of Barcelona; but that the bishop would not allow her to stay in the city, because of the scandals she created.

At the end of the spectacle, Casanova was introduced to the notorious woman, and accepted her invitation to lunch at her house the next day.

When he entered, he found Nina in the heat of a rowdy altercation with a vendor of laces. The laces were beautiful; the woman insisted they were hideous; but, to show that she did

not begrudge the price, she purchased them, seized a pair of scissors, and immediately ripped them to pieces. After an exchange of Billingsgate vituperations, the man left the irate woman. She administered at the same time a powerful slap to the man who had been her messenger on the day before; and, at his departure, she explained to Casanova that he was put there to spy upon her, by the Captain-general; and that she treated him as she did, in order to give him something to write his master.

At the lunch, she ordered the man who had been slapped, a Bolognese musician named Molinari, to attend and have chocolate with her at once. He came, and drank his chocolate without a word. When the meal was over, she invited Casanova to have supper with her that evening; and he decided to accept, to study further this amazing woman. She had not inspired any desire in the Venetian; her conduct was too heartless and outrageous. But it would be something to see the spectacle.

At the meal, the Barcelona temperature was clad in light summer attire. She at once came so warm that Nina and the fool, Molinari, were up to her guest and asked him to follow their example; but, somewhat shocked by the presence of Molinari, he put her off.

Up to the time of the supper, the woman entertained her guest with a thousand stories of which she had been the heroine, from the time she began her life as a libertine, to her present age of twenty-two. These stories made no effect on Casanova, for he could not forget the

presence of the revolting spy of the Governor-general.

At the end of the supper, the visitor was ready to go home. No, indeed, Nina insisted; he must stay for a little pleasure. Casanova could see that the woman was insistent, and that the clown was drunk. So perforce Casanova had to stay.

The scene that he witnessed was revolting to him in a high degree. Intoxicated as the clown was, the beautiful Nina made sport of him, when she found Casanova entirely cold to her. She ended by making the spy drink again, until he fell to the floor in a stupor. When she sought to make love to Casanova, he insisted that the presence of the spy had deadened all his interest in the woman; and agreed to come on the following day, only if she would agree to meet him alone.

Furthermore, she insisted that he come every evening.

"Impossible," Casanova shook his head. "I am leaving day after tomorrow."

"No. You shall not go away for a week, and we shall pass it together."

"It's impossible."

"For you to leave would be an insult to me."

The next day, at seven in the evening, Casanova presented himself to the beautiful Nina. She at once informed him that Molinari would not be present, as he had the colic.

"You—you've poisoned him?"

"I am quite capable of it; but—God forbid! Let us play; after that we shall sup, and we

shall laugh till tomorrow, and tomorrow night we shall start over again."

"You forget—I leave at seven tomorrow!"

Nina smiled possessively. "I have already paid your coachman for the trip, and told him you will not leave tomorrow. Here is the receipt."

Casanova now saw that she intended to carry out her amorous despotism, and smilingly assented. The woman went on to reveal that she did not really love her protector, the Governor-general, except in her desire to ruin him financially. Whereupon our Casanova moralized a bit, in his memoirs:

"I saw before me a woman as beautiful as Venus, as corrupt as the angel of darkness, a horrible wanton and born to punish anyone who could be so unhappy as to fall in love with her. . . . I thought of taking advantage of this woman by making her contribute to my finances."

No, Casanova, if one stops to moralize, there are those who would hardly describe you yourself as an angel of light. And . . . to promptly proceed to "take advantage" of this woman, at cards! Well, morality is a relative matter, you may be glad to remember; and in the eyes of many, you are not a Sunday School model yourself.

After the supper, many follies were committed; but Casanova, tired at last, he says, "for I was no longer at the age of miracles." The perfect seducer grows old, alas.

In their first set-to at cards, the Italian adventurer discovered at once that he was better at the game than Nina; yet, with her good luck,

she rose from the setting twenty pistoles the winner. When they rose, she promised a return game, and this they had on the next day. On this day she lost, as she did on all the following days; altogether he won from her two or three hundred doubloons; and, since his finances were temporarily low, this was quite an aid.

The spy recovered the second day, and thereafter ate with the lovers, faithfully communicating to his master all that took place. The Governor-general wrote Nina a letter which she showed Casanova, saying that the Bishop had withdrawn his prohibition and would let her live in Barcelona as a transient actress, if only she would not cause open scandal. Accordingly, she and Casanova traveled together, yet kept up certain appearances of respectability, into the city. He decided to stay for a while in Barcelona, since Nina told him that, if he needed money, he could call on her for any sum.

Arrived in Barcelona, Casanova had a quarrel with a messenger sent him by the Governor-general, and wounded the man. For this he was locked up at the bottom of the tower for forty days; and, upon his release, was ordered to leave Barcelona in three days, and the province in a week. There was little regret in leaving the beautiful, corrupt Nina: was not the world still full of blossoming girls, even for the aging Harlequin?

CHAPTER IX

LIA, DAUGHTER OF MORDECAI

There were countless other mistresses, in town after town. No one of these adventures was more amusing than that of the Jewish coquette, Lia, daughter of Mordecai. Casanova was now on the threshold of the fifties: in America, the Boston Massacre and the Tea Party had taken place, and Patrick Henry was about to rise to denounce the inept Hanoverians in words of fire. Still the petty souls of petty Europe went about their love-makings and intrigues: still the spirit of Casanova inspired the dwellers in continental boudoirs, and no one more than the man himself.

At the home of the Jewish Mordecai Casanova was entertained at dinner, a dozen being at the table. Of all these only one attracted him —the Jew's youngest daughter, Lia, who was engaged to marry a Jew from Pesaro whom she had never seen.

"Not having seen him, you cannot love him!"

She answered soberly, "But love is not at all necessary to marriage."

"She's a prudent girl," quavered the old grandmother, ninety years old.

Lia's mother spoke up comfortably. "I did not love my husband until after our first child."

Casanova determined to win the prudent maid. She was to attend to the washing of his linen, as long as he stayed in the house of

Mordecai; and the Venetian arranged also that she was to eat with him, since he and she alone of the group liked goose livers.

Since he was staying as a member of the family, the girl did not bother to dress elaborately for him, but wore a negligee which displayed more of her charms than a stranger ordinarily would have seen. Casanova reflected that he knew something of the love-making of women of the girl's race, due to his affaire with Lia of Turin; and, besides, Ancona was much freer than Turin, and his chance of success much greater.

Casanova asked permission of her father that the girl be allowed to eat with him every day. The father agreed, in case Casanova would pay for both dinners. Since love was his object, he did not begrudge the extra coins. Yet the girl remained quite cold to his suggestions of a kiss; and, when he sought to kiss her hand, drew it away with dignity: "Too much for honor, and not enough for love."

How was he to effect this conquest? There was his old device, of displaying sentimental pictures, hoping thereby to inflame the girl's imagination. She looked at the first with interest, then burst out laughing. Instead of being impressed, she said that there was nothing interesting to her in that picture.

For all that Lia did not seem to be effected by the pictures, she borrowed the book—a set of engravings—and persisted in asking Casanova very intimate questions. The conversation disquieted him very much.

His complete lack of success made Casanova

despair of achieving his purpose; and he notified the consul that he was leaving at the first opportunity. At two o'clock in the morning, while prowling around the house, he saw on the first floor a light under the door of a closed bed room. Gazing through the tiny slit, his amazement was great at seeing Lia in the room in company with a man, and both engaged in carefully trying to imitate the romantic pictures. They were doing this with great soberness, as if at a rehearsal: evidently they were seriously trying to learn the mechanical poses of romance.

Lia, when they had concluded the last pose, evidently was anxious to try others: but the young man, looking at his watch, shook his head, and started to leave. At this Casanova went back to his room, disillusioned and indignant.

Despite his determination, on going to sleep, to have nothing more to do with her, the sight of her serene face the next day altered his determination. Calmly he told her all that he had seen, and demanded that she grant him as much affection as she had granted his rival, both in return for his love and to insure his secrecy.

The girl answered firmly that she did not love him, and hence would not accede to his request; and that she knew him well enough to know that he would not reveal such information through a spirit of revenge.

Baffled at every turn, the Venetian discovered a boat sailing for Fiume that day, paid for his passage, paid off Mordecai, and got his trunks ready. Lia came to him and told him that she

would not have his linen, laces, and silk stockings ready so soon.

"Take them to the Venetian consul; he will forward them to me."

She accepted without reluctance Casanova's present of the few bottles of wine he had still untouched, telling him that he had seen a comedy gratis that was assuredly worth several gold pieces; and, so pleased was she, that she would gladly have furnished him another similar comedy soon.

Losing his temper, Casanova grasped a wine bottle, as if to strike her with it, as payment for her impudence. She faced him with quiet courage; and, instead, he filled his own glass and drank it morosely.

He carried out his resolution to have nothing more to do with the girl, by going aboard the boat at the appointed time: he intended never to see her again. The boat put out to sea. But then the wind veered suddenly, the little ship began to veer and pitch sickeningly, and the captain said that there was nothing to do but to return to Ancona, since it would be too risky to try making any other port.

In less than three hours, they were back in the port; and the sailors, without instructions, took Casanova's baggage back to Mordecai's house. It was three o'clock when he himself arrived here, and he went at once to bed. When he awoke, after ten hours of steady sleep, a servant waited on him, saying that Lia was in bed with a violent headache. Casanova thanked providence for this additional blessing.

The Venetian consul called at last, and said

that from all indications the bad weather would last for another week at least. Of course, this meant that he must see the detestable girl again. Sure enough, she reappeared on the second day. Casanova made it plain that he would eat alone henceforth; and, with this rebuff, the girl went out. When the girl told her father that Casanova had humiliated her, and feared that he would be poisoned by the food, he exclaimed in irritation that that was all nonsense; but, to show that he could afford it, he would still pay for the triple dinners, if the father would eat with him, as well as the daughter; or he would eat alone. Mordecai said that he did not have the heart to let the man eat alone; and, at the meal, when both Lia and Casanova refused to drink, drank for the three of them.

After a solitary supper, Casanova went to bed and to sleep. Suddenly he was awakened by a slight noise.

"Who is there?"

The voice of Lia answered, in a low tone: "It is I. I do not come to worry you, but for half an hour's talk with you, to justify my behavior."

This strange call, so out of harmony with the girl's previous actions, pleased Casanova; for all he now wished of her was revenge. Accordingly, he urged her in a gentle voice to go away, saying that he realized that she was justified in her conduct.

"I shall not go away until you have heard me."

"Then speak—I am listening."

She began to talk: and talked for an hour.

She blamed everything on the fact that she was eighteen, totally unversed in love, and of a romantic nature. The pictures, she said, had stirred her sentimental emotions. She said that she really loved Casanova; but she had also been in love with the other, a worthless Christian who cared for her only as she paid him.

Still wondering just what was in the girl's mind, Casanova assured her that he would cherish no resentment, and urged her to leave him.

He knew that this was not what the girl wanted: and, after waiting in vain for her to take the aggressive, he told her good night, and she went away. In the morning, she tiptoed in, attractively negligee. Casanova pretended to be asleep; she hesitated in the room, then went out. When she returned, she was fully dressed.

When he retired that night, Casanova locked the door. But here came the persistent girl's knock on the door, asking that she be allowed to come back and talk to him after the others had gone to bed. "You can go on to bed," she continued. "I am no longer dangerous for you."

Agreeing with this, he retired, and awaited her with his light still lit. At eleven o'clock, a slight noise announced her entry. She entered, gently closed the door and locked it, and came over to the bedside. She placed herself quietly on the bed beside him.

On the next day, Casanova changed his plans of departure, so as to allow himself an additional month in Ancona. It was a month of utter pleasure. Casanova, writing years afterwards in his memoirs of the affair, stated naively that

he thought the father knew of the relationship, and encouraged it, so as to produce another Israelite. But Casanova was more of a lover than a philosopher. For every night of the month they were together. At the end of the month, he had to depart for Triest, leaving with the girl the jewelled heart which she had first admired on meeting him; and leaving with her a portion of that heart whose inexhaustible portions were scattered from Tomsk to the Gates of Hercules, and from the south of Italy to the north of France.

With this, we must bid farewell to the matchless lover. When he became too old to love, he was appointed by his old friend, Count Waldstein, the latter's librarian, at his chateau of Dux in Bohemia. Here he lived, writing the unparalleled memoirs, until the 4th of June, 1798. Then he passed quietly from the uneasy planet where he had thrilled generations of women, and had mirrored the more personal aspects of a century.

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